

**ASPIRA, INC. OF NEW JERSEY**

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FROM THE DESK OF:

**HILDA ROSARIO**

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Margie

Please let me  
know if this is  
something you want  
me to do. H



State of New Jersey  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
20 WEST STATE STREET  
CN 542  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625

RECEIVED NOV 22 1991

November 20, 1991

Hilda Rosario  
ASPIRA  
390 Broad Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07104

Dear Hilda:

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the Council for the Education of Language Minority Students (CELMS). Enclosed for your information please find a copy of the memorandum that proposed the establishment of the CELMS. It will provide you with information relative to the rationale for establishing the group, the issues pertaining to quality education for this diverse and rapidly growing population, the structure of the Council and the responsibilities of its members. The length of appointment will be two years.

The process of selecting Council members as specified in the board memorandum, involves an invitation letter from the Chancellor to college presidents to nominate one or more individuals from their institutions. The memo includes some general criteria for selection. I encourage you to express your interest in participating in the Council to your President, and urge him/her to nominate you. After the selection process is finished, nominees who have been selected for membership will receive a notification letter from the Office of Bilingual Educational Issues.

Again, my thanks for your interest and willingness to contribute to our students' future in such an important task.

Sincerely,

Marta R. Cabral  
Director

Office of Bilingual Educational Issues

Enclosure



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08646

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Board of Higher Education

FROM: Sister Jacqueline Burns, Chair *of the*  
Academic Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: Proposal for a Council for the Education of Language Minority  
Students

DATE: September 11, 1991

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

The Academic Affairs Committee presents for your consideration this proposal to establish a Council for the Education of Language Minority Students (CELMS). The goal in establishing a standing advisory council is to assist the Board and the Department of Higher Education in developing a comprehensive and coordinated approach to educational programs and policy for language minority students. The group upon which the Council's efforts will focus is composed of students who come from cultural backgrounds where English is not the primary language and whose English proficiency is limited.

The education of language minority students poses a formidable challenge to New Jersey's education community. The size of language minority populations in the state has been growing rapidly, and this growth is expected to continue. Unless these growing populations are academically prepared to contribute to our state's economy, they will remain an underutilized resource.

Although many language minority students have high cognitive abilities, they function at a severe disadvantage in a college environment where English is used exclusively. The proposed Council will provide a needed mechanism for the study of issues and development of policies to facilitate the education of this large and growing segment of the state's people.

The proposal has been reviewed by individuals and groups in higher education and the language minority community and has broad support.

The Committee recommends that you approve the establishment of this Council and authorize the Chancellor to begin the process of selecting members.

## BACKGROUND

The population of New Jersey includes people who belong to a large array of ethnic and linguistic groups (Attachment A). Some are recent immigrants. Others are the children of not-so-recent immigrants who live in tight-knit communities where the preservation of linguistic and cultural traditions is a way of life. Puerto Ricans, of course, are Spanish-speaking United States citizens.

The largest influx into New Jersey has been of Hispanic groups. In addition to Puerto Ricans, the population includes Cubans, Dominicans, other Central Americans, and South Americans. The state also has a substantial representation of Asian and Middle Eastern populations as well as recent immigrants from Haiti, Portugal, and Eastern Europe. Language minority students tend to come from homes located primarily in large urban areas in the northern part of the state; recently there has been an increase of Hispanics and Asians in rural areas in the southern part of the state as well.

1990 U.S. Census figures indicate that there are presently nearly 750,000 Hispanics and over 250,000 Asians residing in New Jersey (Attachment B). New Jersey's Hispanic population alone grew by more than 50% from 1980 to 1990 (Attachment C, Table A). The Hispanic population is substantially younger than that of the state in general (Attachment C, Table B). The United States Department of Labor's statistical projections indicate that more than one-fourth of the new members of the labor force will come from language minority groups by the year 2000 (Attachment D).

All of these statistics indicate that Hispanics as well as other language minority groups will have an increasing impact on our society in the years ahead, and that growing numbers of persons from these groups are likely to seek opportunities in education and the workplace. Yet language minority students continue to lag behind in educational achievement and attainment. Quite apart from considerations of fairness and equity, it is clear that an important and growing segment of the state's human resource base will be wasted, to the detriment of New Jersey's economic competitiveness in the world market, unless these conditions are addressed.

## EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Students from many nationalities are currently enrolled in 28 English as a Second Language (ESL) programs throughout the state. A nationality survey conducted by the Institute for Intensive English at Union County College in November 1990 indicated that students studying English at the Institute represented fifty-seven countries (Attachment E). Most of these students attend college on a part-time basis.

An informal survey conducted by the Department of Higher Education in Fall 1990 indicates that about 9,400 Limited English Proficient (LEP) students are currently enrolled in ESL courses (Attachment F). Most of them enroll in community colleges and attend on a part-time basis. Fall 1990 data indicate that over 19,000 Hispanics and 11,805 Asian students were enrolled in New Jersey colleges (Attachment G). There are 3,015 Hispanics and 823 Asian students enrolled in the Educational Opportunity Fund (EOF) Program. This constitutes over 25% and 7% respectively of the total EOF population (Attachment H).

Whether they are recent immigrants, first generation offspring of immigrants, the students to whom we want to provide service have in common some form of limited English proficiency. Although their scholastic aptitude and cognitive ability may be high, in most cases their academic performance does not reflect their potential in a college environment where English is used exclusively. Most are, therefore, at a distinct disadvantage.

A recent report from the National Center for Post-secondary Governance and Finance includes state equity scores for both enrollment and graduation for African Americans and Hispanics in a number of states (Attachment I). The enrollment equity score represents the proportion of the ethnic population enrolled at institutions in a given state compared to the proportion of the same ethnic group in the state's population as a whole. The graduation equity score similarly compares the percentage of an ethnic group as a proportion of the students graduating from college in a given state in a given year to its proportion among all undergraduate students enrolled in the state four years earlier. These indicators are intended to measure institutional and state performance in enrolling and graduating minority students. A score of 100 or greater indicates appropriate proportional representation. The enrollment equity score for Hispanics in 1988 in New Jersey was 107 compared to a graduation equity score of 77 showing that the state's access for Hispanic students is creditable; however, of the ten states outlined, New Jersey ranked at the bottom in terms of graduation equity score for Hispanic students. This discrepancy between the enrollment and graduation data for Hispanics underscores the urgent need to develop effective programs to ensure an improvement in the retention and subsequent graduation of these students.

An adequate programmatic response to the needs of language minority students is complicated by enormous diversity with respect to age, the number and variety of native languages involved, the wide range of English language proficiency represented, and great differences in general cognitive development. The students run the gamut from those who are highly educated and literate in their native languages to those who have had little formal education and are not fully literate in any language.

One common approach to the preparation of language minority students for success in higher education has been English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. In addition to the need for English language instruction, certain groups of these students would benefit from bilingual courses and special academic support services. For others, remediation in reading, writing, and mathematics in their "mother" language may be the most effective place to start. Factors such as institutional climate, teaching style, cultural content in the curriculum, quality of instruction, and the availability of financial aid, career counseling, and other support services also play important roles that should be better understood.

The K-12 system should be addressing the English language development and other educational needs of many language minority students and integrating them into the educational system at a much earlier age. The Department of Higher Education is prepared to collaborate with the Department of Education in an effort to better define the objectives of bilingual programs in the schools, develop criteria for measuring their effectiveness, improve the English language skills of language minority students before they enter college, increase the number of students in the college-going pool, and ensure the

development of appropriate programs of teacher preparation.

In the recent past, the Department of Higher Education has developed several initiatives regarding the education of language minority students. We have achieved modest success in addressing the educational needs of a limited number of students.

The Department has encouraged access and equal opportunity for language minority students through the Ethnolinguistic Grant Program, the Puerto Rican Exchange Program, and the Hispanic Leadership Program. Since 1987 the Ethnolinguistic Grant Program has assisted New Jersey colleges and universities to establish or enhance programs in ESL instruction, academic support, and cultural enrichment. To date, funding has been awarded to 14 institutions to serve an average of 2,000 students each year. In addition, from a multicultural perspective, the Puerto Rican Exchange Program has promoted inter-institutional communication between New Jersey and Puerto Rico, increased the academic and technical resources available to participating institutions, and improved the quality of the learning experience for Puerto Rican students in New Jersey. Both the Puerto Rican Exchange Program and the Hispanic Fellows Leadership Program have facilitated the personal, scholarly and professional development of a cadre of promising Hispanic professionals who presently occupy leadership positions in our colleges and universities.

Although past efforts have been beneficial, far more should be done.

#### THE NEED FOR A NEW ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION OF LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS (CELMS)

While some institutions are providing a comprehensive and effective array of services for language minority students, others need to heighten their efforts as we need to serve more students. Though the current fiscal climate is hardly conducive to the initiation of what promises to be an extensive effort, it is certainly not too soon to begin. We need to better assess the extent to which new policies and programs are needed.

Further, most of the data collected by the Department focus on Hispanics who, in the aggregate, constitute a majority of the state's language minority population. Data collection on the other language subgroups is needed to begin developing appropriate educational responses to their needs.

The Committee, on the recommendation of the Chancellor, is therefore proposing for your consideration the creation of a new advisory council, to be known as the Council on the Education of Language Minority Students (CELMS). It will be asked to study issues regarding the identification and education of language minority students and develop policy and programmatic recommendations for consideration by the Chancellor and the Board of Higher Education.

Among the specific issues that might be addressed by the Council are the following:

#### 1. Identification of the Target Population

Data are currently available on the enrollment of Puerto Ricans, other Hispanics, and other minority groups attending colleges and universities in New Jersey. However, there is no systematic process in place to identify

individuals who belong to language minority groups and whose English language skills are limited. The data base on LEP students is incomplete, largely because institutions are uncertain how to identify these students. The CELMS might be asked to recommend to the Department of Higher Education a classification system and a methodology for identifying target groups of language minority students, and assist the Office of Bilingual Educational Issues and the Research Office in collecting the necessary data from the institutions.

## 2. Assessment and Placement

Currently, students who have been admitted to New Jersey institutions of higher education as freshmen are required to take the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test to assess their level of readiness in reading, writing, and mathematics to take college-level courses. This placement test is used to assess the skills of students who are native speakers of English. Students who take this test should have enough proficiency in the English language to understand what is being asked in the NJCBSPT. Therefore, the testing of students who are enrolled in English as a Second Language courses is deferred until they complete their ESL instruction.

The educational needs of language minority students should be assessed in an analogous fashion; policies and procedures should be developed to provide educational programs and support services appropriate to their needs. The identification of limited English proficient students should be followed by individual assessment and placement into an appropriate course sequence. Testing instruments should be reviewed and/or further developed to assess accurately the needs of the language minority population. There should be a system to monitor students' placement and progress on a continuing basis. Greater coordination of effort should occur among the Basic Skills, EOF, and ESL offices at the institutions. The CELMS might be charged to recommend a system of assessing the educational needs of various groups of language minority students throughout the state's colleges and universities, assist in the development of any new testing instruments that may be needed, and collect and report data on students' placement and progress.

## 3. Identification of Model Programs

A number of colleges and universities in New Jersey and elsewhere in the country have developed and implemented programs that serve the needs of language minority students. There has been no coordinated effort in this state, however, to review existing programs and services that might be replicated, especially at institutions with large numbers of language minority students. The CELMS might provide a mechanism to study the relative effectiveness of educational programs which address the linguistic and cultural needs of various groups of language minority students, and promote the development of effective programs at our institutions.

## 4. Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

Program effectiveness, measured in terms of the retention and subsequent graduation of language minority students from our colleges and universities, will be adequately measured only when data collection and analysis become integral to the programs. The CELMS might assist institutions to describe and define the characteristics of effective programs and develop procedures to

ensure the on-going evaluation of program activities and functions. The success of students is the ultimate measure of program effectiveness. A coordinated evaluation of programs and services by CELMS might promote more effective education for language minority students throughout the state.

## 5. Forum

The CELMS might provide a forum for the discussion of issues pertaining to the education of language minority students including enrollment, retention, graduation, program development and implementation, review of program outcomes, resource allocation, and advocacy. The Council might also be expected to discuss the services needed to assist students to develop coping skills, increase their level of independence and self-motivation, and provide for their continued development of skills proficiencies. Additional issues which might be addressed include strategies to increase the pool of potential students and improve their preparation before entering college, recruitment practices and admission policies, language acquisition programs, transfer articulation agreements, financial aid, and the recruitment and retention of faculty and staff.

In addition, the Council would set an overall agenda and priorities, facilitate cooperation and collaboration among the colleges and universities, and provide a mechanism for improved communication among the Department, the colleges and universities, the private sector, and community agencies on all language minority issues.

## COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

The Council would include members drawn from all institutional sectors, representatives from the public and private sectors, and staff from the Department of Higher Education.

Specifically, we are recommending that the Council be comprised of one or more representatives from the following:

- Rutgers, the State University
- New Jersey Institute of Technology
- University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey
- State Colleges
- Community Colleges
- Independent Colleges & Universities
- Members-at-large (to be selected from government, the private sector, social agencies, etc.)
- K-12 Education
- Department of Higher Education

College and university presidents will be asked to nominate one or more persons to serve on the Council. The nominees should be individuals who are knowledgeable about second language acquisition issues and techniques, including bilingual education and English as a Second Language instruction, and who have a background in one or more of the following areas: program development and evaluation, research methodology, and testing and placement. Most desirable for selection would be persons who, in addition to possessing the qualities just mentioned, serve or have served language minority students,



are strong advocates for their needs, and are well versed in the issues affecting their education.

#### CONCLUSION

Both the Department and New Jersey's institutions of higher education can benefit from further guidance on the programmatic needs of language minority students. On behalf of the Academic Affairs Committee, I recommend your positive action on this proposal. CELMS will provide a much needed mechanism for the study of issues and development of policies and programs affecting the education of a large and growing segment of the state's population.